

Documentation of a Portion of the Concepción *Acequia*, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

by
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Abstract:

The Center for Archaeological Research at The University of Texas (CAR-UTSA) was contracted by the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind to investigate the location of a proposed new facility. Previous research had indicated that a portion of the Concepción *Acequia* (*Pajalache Acequia*) was present on the property. CAR was asked to perform archaeological investigations to determine if the path of the Concepción *Acequia* was present in the project area and to document evidence of the *acequia*. Backhoe trenching was conducted in two locations within the project area over the course of one day. In both backhoe trenches evidence of the *acequia* was noted. Backhoe Trench 1 was located along a ridge that appears to follow the old path of the *acequia*. Backhoe Trench 2 was placed bisecting a visible drainage within the Area of Potential Effect. Neither backhoe trench produced artifacts that pertained to the colonial period or nineteenth century. CAR and the City Archaeologist recommended that the *acequia* be avoided during construction. Some grading may be needed within the APE, but it is expected to have little to no impact on the *features*. No further investigations are recommended within the vicinity of the *acequia*.

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Thanks also goes to employees at CAR that helped to complete the project. The field crew consisted of Lindy Martinez and Steve Smith. Steve Tomka, CAR Director, served as Principal Investigator and offered much guidance throughout the course of the project. Marybeth Tomka, Lab Director at CAR, processed field paperwork and final curation. Rick Young prepared the figures for the report. Kelly Harris edited the original draft and formatted the final version of the report.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind contracted the Center for Archaeological Research (CAR) at The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) to conduct intensive investigations on property slated for the construction of a new building. A portion of the Concepción *Acequia*, also known as the *Pajalache Acequia*, was believed to have passed through the property that the Lighthouse for the Blind had acquired for the new facility. Prior to breaking ground, the City Archaeologist required the Lighthouse for the Blind to investigate the area for the possible presence of the *acequia*. Since the land was privately owned at the time of the project, and all funding was from private sources, it was decided in consultation with the Office of Historic Preservation that the project did not fall under the Antiquities Code of Texas. The San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind requested that CAR perform the investigations and document any portion of the *acequia* encountered.

The Area of Potential Effect (APE) is located in southern Bexar County on the San Antonio East (1998-133) USGS 7.5 minute quadrangle map (Figure 1-1). The project area is south of downtown San Antonio, approximately 1.3 km (0.81 mi.) southeast of Mission Concepción. The APE is bounded on the north by Eads Avenue, on the east by railroad tracks, on the south by a work yard, and on the west by a concrete-lined drainage ditch. The southern portion of the lot is overgrown with brush and trees (Figure 1-2). The northern portion of the lot had been cleared and, at one time, at least a portion of it was covered with asphalt. Remnants of asphalt extend past the previous footprint of the pad and into the heavily overgrown area. In addition to the asphalt, some material from the railroad tracks was found within the APE. This included some of the rocks that lined the track and spikes that were used to hold down the ties.

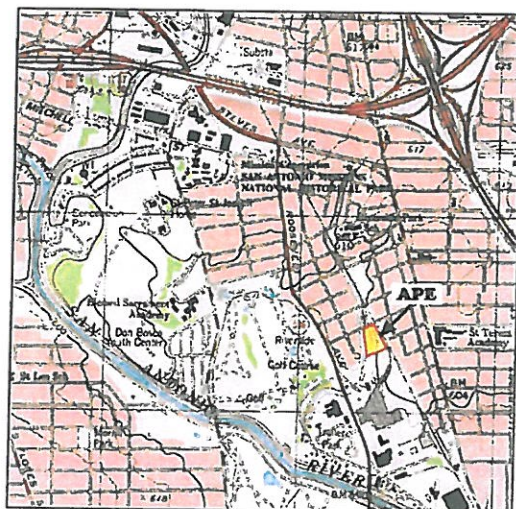


Figure 1-1. Location of project area on the San Antonio East (1998-133) USGS 7.5 minute quadrangle map.

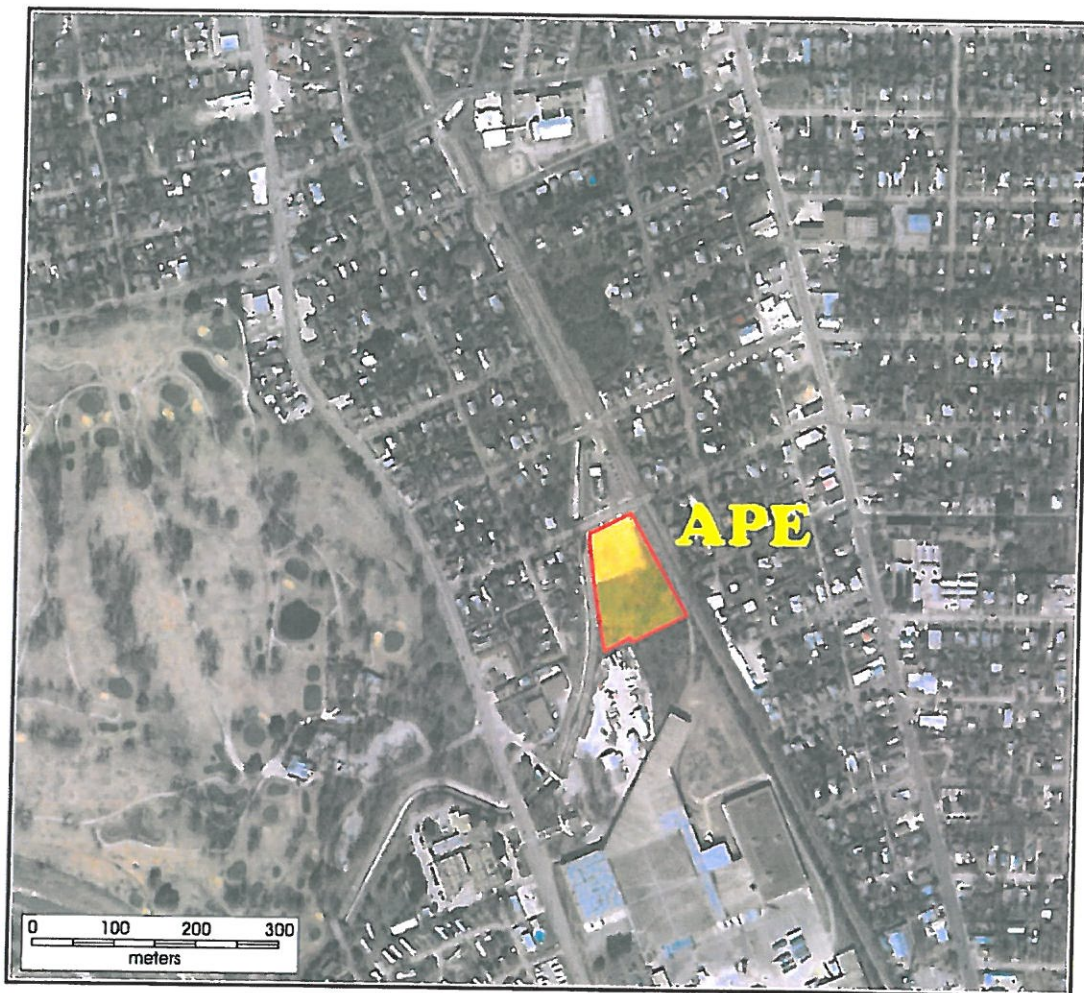


Figure 1-2. *Current aerial photograph of the location of the APE.*

Bexar County sits at the edge of the Edwards Plateau on the Balcones Escarpment, which encompasses parts of the Gulf Coastal Plain, the Hill Country, and the Edwards Plateau, thereby offering a suite of wildlife and natural resources which were exploited by inhabitants of the area. The escarpment is a line of hills and cliffs that extend through Central Texas and serve as a dividing line between the ecological zones of the Edwards Plateau and the Blackland Prairie. It is the surface expression of the Balcones fault zone, which is a series of faults running from Del Rio to Waco, dividing limestone on the west from claystone, chalks, and marls on the east. Numerous caves and springs exist along the fault zone. The springs feed rivers and provide fresh water sources that encourage human settlement of the area. The landscape changes dramatically from east to west across the escarpment. The Edwards Plateau to the west is rugged with thin, stony soils supporting a juniper-live oak savannah best suited for ranchlands. To the

east, the Blackland Prairie features rolling hills, broad rivers, and fertile clays that support native prairie grasslands and modern agriculture (Woodruff and Abbott 1986).

The San Antonio River is located approximately 0.75 km (0.5 mi.) to the southwest of the project area. Its headwaters are commonly reported to be the San Antonio Springs at the “Blue Hole” located north of the APE, on the campus of the University of the Incarnate Word. Numerous springs rising from the Edwards Aquifer feed the river within the Olmos Creek catchment basin to the north. The greater San Antonio River Basin drains 6,727 sq. km (4,180 sq. mi.) of land. The San Antonio River is 290 km (180 mi.) long stretching from downtown San Antonio to Tivoli where it empties into the Guadalupe River. The Medina River and Cibolo Creek are its two major tributaries (SARA 2012).

The San Antonio River was very important to the colonial occupation of the area. Ditches, known as *acequias*, were cut into the landscape to move water from the river to the farmlands of the missions and the settlers. The *acequias* were the only way of providing water for crops, livestock, and people during the early years of the mission period in San Antonio. Within the missions, wells were excavated, but only served the populace inside the compound. Those living on the outskirts had to rely on the *acequia* for their water needs.

Chapter 2: Background and Previous Archaeological Investigations

Historic Background

Its proximity to Mission Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña, approximately 1.3 km (0.81 mi.) northwest, and the San Antonio River, approximately 0.76 km (0.47 mi.) to the southwest, places the APE in an area that has been used extensively in the early portions of the development of San Antonio. In association with the mission were farmlands and an *acequia* system.

Mission Concepción (41BX12)

Mission Concepción (41BX12) was established in 1731 as one of the three missions that relocated from East Texas. The mission was originally established in Nacogdoches County in 1716. Over the next two years, the mission was subjected to a severe drought that reduced crop yields and lead to a food shortage. At the same time, smallpox was rampant in the area (Habig 1968). In 1719, an attack on Presidio los Adaes by the French spurred the residents of the East Texas missions to flee. The threat of French attacks was lessened in 1721. The missions were re-established with protection provided by Presidio del Loreto de la Bahia that was located on the site of the French's Fort Saint Louis. The next decade saw little success at the East Texas Missions. In 1731, they removed themselves to San Antonio.

Mission Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña, as it was renamed when it relocated to San Antonio, is speculated to have been established at the first site of Mission San José y San Miguel de Aguayo and Mission San Francisco Xavier de Nájera. That location was abandoned by San José prior to 1722, and then abandoned by Mission San Francisco by 1729. Archaeological investigations at the site have produced historic cultural material that predates Mission Concepción (Ivey and Fox 1999).

The stone church at Mission Concepción was completed by 1756. Lands along the San Antonio River belonging to the mission were being irrigated and producing crops. An irrigated farm was located just outside the mission compound walls (Figueroa et al. 2009). A ranch located along the Cibolo Creek raised cattle, sheep, pigs, and horses for the mission. The mission thrived until 1789, serving native groups that originated from Northern Mexico, South Texas, and the Texas Gulf Coast (Campbell and Campbell 1985: Table 2). During the later portion of the 18th century, the native population of the mission steadily declined. By the beginning of secularization in 1789, only 38 individuals resided at the mission (Habig 1968). At the when secularization underway in 1794, the holdings of the mission were divided into 26 portions and distributed among the native households. The church was placed under the

care of Mission San Jose, but the other buildings were used by the locals. Final secularization occurred in 1821 although there was a period in 1813 when the mission was chosen as the headquarters for revolutionary forces (González 1996). The mission buildings themselves changed hands several times over the next few decades. In 1841, Bishop Odin began to purchase old mission property to return to the church's holdings. The chapel remained under the care of the church, though it was not in use between secularization and 1861. The Archdiocese regained control of the church and some of the mission grounds in 1911. In 1978, Mission Concepción became part of the National Park Service's San Antonio Missions National Historical Park (Figueroa et al. 2009).

The Concepcion Acequia

Concepción Acequia is believed to be one of the earliest *acequias* created in the San Antonio area. Documents indicate that permission to construct the *acequia* was granted in the late 1720s, prior to the occupation of the site by Mission Concepción. It is likely that the *acequia* was initially constructed to serve Mission San Jose (Cox 2005). The Concepción Acequia is also referred to as the Pajalache Acequia in historic documents. The *acequia* began at a large dam that was located at Presa Street near LaVilita (Cox 2005). The beginning was located at a high point in downtown San Antonio which required that a very large cut be made to get the water into the channel. The width of the *acequia* channel was reported as 20 feet at the inlet (Cox 2005). Early accounts indicate that the priests used a boat on this portion of the *acequia* to attend to the cleaning (Cox 2005). The *acequia* returned to the San Antonio River southwest of Mission Concepcion, at a point in the river south of the confluence of San Pedro Creek (Cox 2005). However, a number of *desagues* were likely present along its course allowing the return of water into the river when necessary.

The *acequia* then flowed southwest along the western side of the road leading to the southern missions. At a point approximately 762 m (2,500 ft.) from the intake, the water from a later portion of the Alamo *Acequia* flowed through a hollow log over the canal. The log was replaced with a stone aqueduct by 1890. From this point, the Concepción *Acequia* flowed to the mission compound. It then turned west to reenter the San Antonio River at a point south of the confluence of San Pedro Creek. The original channel of the Concepción *Acequia* was approximately 5.3 km (3.3 mi.) in length (Cox 2005).

The Concepción *Acequia* was altered several times during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A double gate was constructed approximately 2.3 km (1.4 mi.) from the initial intake. An eastern branch of the *acequia* was constructed to provide water to farmland east of the original channel. The length of the *acequia* was increased to approximately 12.1 km (7.5 mi.) with the new additions (Cox 2005).

In 1828, the governor recommended that the Concepción *Acequia* be shut because it tended to overflow during times of heavy rain. The town council formed a committee to investigate issues along the Concepción *Acequia* as well as interview landholders along the *acequia* route. No changes were made at that time. In 1830, the mayor again indicated that there were still problems with the Concepción *Acequia*. No action was taken once the owners countered with their own questions to the mayor's recommendations. It was not until 1869 that the Concepción *Acequia* was finally closed. Increased rainfall had led to several flooding episodes suggesting that the *acequia* was not being properly maintained. In addition, the dam that had been built for the *acequia* at its headgate hindered the flow of the water down the river and increased the likelihood of flooding during heavy rains. The council agreed on the closing of the Concepción *Acequia* to deal with the flooding issues (Cox 2005).

A portion of the Concepción *Acequia* passes through the current APE. This *acequia* is visible on current aerials as a heavily overgrown path. This portion of the *acequia* was likely one of the branches that was a later addition to the original 5.3 km (3.3 mi.) length.

Previous Archaeological Investigations

The APE was initially part of a survey conducted in 1976 by the Texas Historical Commission (THC). The survey was conducted prior to the construction of Mission Parkway and was undertaken to determine what cultural resources were located within the vicinity of the road. Eighty-four prehistoric and historic sites were recorded along the route of the road (Scurlock et al. 1976). Later, in 1980, the National Parks Service conducted a survey of the same area. The NPS survey was undertaken to gain information concerning the layout of Mission Concepción and the potential path to reroute Mission Road. During Phase I of the project, archival research was conducted to locate architectural features at Mission Concepción, to locate the Concepción *Acequia*, and to review the occupation history of the mission and the grounds. Phase II of the project consisted of excavations around the mission compound to determine the layout of buildings and the occupation sequence (Ivey and Fox 1999). The current APE lies on the edge of the Mission Parkway National Register District.

Mission Concepción has had many archaeological investigations conducted on its grounds. The first investigations conducted at the mission occurred during the 1930s when Harvey P. Smith oversaw excavations as part of the Works Progress Administration. The investigations focused on uncovering and mapping the mission structures and buried foundations. The work conducted during this time resulted in a map of the structure and located foundations, but no notes concerning the investigations or artifacts found have been located (Figueroa et al. 2009).

The first professional archaeological investigations at Mission Concepción occurred in 1970 and 1972 by the Texas Historical Commission. More recent excavations at the mission have been conducted by the Center for Archaeological Research, including field schools at both high school and university levels (Figueroa et al. 2009). For a full synopsis of the archaeological investigations, see *Archaeological Investigations in the Courtyard of Mission Nuestra Señora de la Purísima* Acuña (41BX12) by Figueroa et al. (2009).

One of the most recent surveys conducted in the area was on property located across the street from Mission Concepción. Prior to revamping Concepción Park and re-aligning Theo Ave, the grounds were surveyed to search for significant cultural deposits and for evidence of the Battle of Concepción. It was previously believed that the park was the location of the Battle. This project² conducted in 2010 found no evidence of a battle. Shovel testing and metal detecting did not produce ~~any artifacts that could be associated with the event that occurred in 1835~~. The archaeological investigations concluded that Concepción Park is not the location of the Battle of Concepción (Ulrich 2016).

While the survey did not encounter any evidence of the Battle of Concepción, it did relocate a 1930s irrigation canal that served the St. Peter-St. Joseph's Orphanage and identified a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) era stone wall lining the bank of an old meander of the San Antonio River. Given the potential that other significant resources may exist within the project area, the CAR recommended monitoring of all ground disturbing construction activities. Backhoe trenching revealed a portion of a secondary lateral to the Main Ditch employed by St. PJ's Children's Home during the early 1900s to irrigate their agricultural fields. The CAR assumes that the junction of this secondary lateral with the Main Ditch is nearby and may be within the proposed Theo Avenue Right-of-Way. Both features are associated with agricultural activities carried out at the orphanage and do not date to the Spanish Colonial Period. The bulk of the Spanish Colonial Concepción *Acequia desagüe* (discharge channel) appears to be located under the present route of Theo Avenue.

The subsequent monitoring of construction activities associated with tree plantings, installation of drainage pipes, and the demolition of the baseball field and playground in Concepción Park and along the new Theo right-of-way, identified no significant cultural remains.

Archaeological Sites in the Vicinity of the APE

In addition to the many excavations at Mission Concepción and the few that took place in its vicinity, two archaeological sites closer to the project area have also been recorded and are briefly summarized below.

Site 41BX1808 is a historic trash deposit located approximately 0.5 km (0.3 mi.) southwest of the current APE. This site was recorded during investigations of the Riverside Golf Course conducted by SWCA in 2009. The site is located on the eastern portion of the golf course that is used for chipping and putting. The trash deposit is related to the horse racing track that had been located on the premises during the 1880s. Artifacts encountered during backhoe trenching included metal fragments, historic glass, a nail, a horseshoe and a horse radius bone. The area had been highly disturbed by the construction of the golf course (THC 2012).

Located to the northwest of 41BX1808, and approximately 0.7 km (0.4 mi.) from the current APE, is site 41BX1802. It was also recorded during the investigations conducted by SWCA along the Riverside Golf Course in 2009. The site is a portion of a branch of the Concepción *Acequia*. The backhoe trenching revealed a U-shaped trench in the profile that appeared to be a portion of a clay-lined *acequia*. Within the *acequia* trench, historic material, including bailing wire, metal fragments, and a historic fork, were encountered. Disturbance was noted in the area, but the path of the *acequia* appeared to be relatively undisturbed. The top of the *acequia* was approximately 20 cm (7.9 in.) below the surface. The *acequia* appears to be orientated north-south and extends to a depth of 75 cm (29.5 in.) below the surface. SWCA recommended that further work be done for any future activities that will impact the subsurface in the adjacent area (THC 2012).

One additional historic site is noted in the vicinity of the APE. The property is known as the Rough Rider Pecan. A group of large pecan trees located approximately 0.4 km (0.25 mi.) from the current APE are named for the mounted cavalry group lead by Theodore Roosevelt. In 1898, twelve mounted cavalry companies were organized and trained in San Antonio. This was prior to the war against Spain and after the sinking of the Battleship Maine. The commander of the First U.S. Volunteer Cavalry Regiment was Colonel Leonard Wood. Theodore Roosevelt served as Lieutenant Colonel. Roosevelt trained his troops in San Antonio prior to departing with the regiments to Tampa, Florida, and then to Cuba. The grove of pecans is in a park setting with a historical marker (THC 2012).

Deed History of the Current APE

In August of 1838, Asa Mitchell purchased the property from Manuel Yturri Castillo (BCDR A2:73). Within the deed record for this transaction, it was noted that Castillo obtained the majority of the property from José Antonio Saucedo in December of 1823. A portion was transferred from Balthazar Calbo in July of 1829. The current APE is only a small portion of the property that was conveyed in the transaction. At the time that the property was in Castillo's possession, it included the Mission Concepción grounds. In addition to conveying the property, Castillo also conveyed the water rights and

the structure on the property. The structure was described as “three rooms built of stone, and connected together in a row, which adjoins the church [Concepción] at its southeast corner” (BCDR A2:74). It is possible that this was combined with another lot Mitchell purchased in 1839 that was just south of the Castillo property to create a much larger holding (BCDR A2:159). According to deed records, Mitchell purchased a large quantity of land between 1838 and 1840 that was once part of Mission Valero’s and Mission Concepción’s holdings.

In November of 1852, Elizabeth Cook paid Asa Mitchell the sum of \$6,000 for a tract of land situated to the south of land owned by Mission Concepción, to the north of the San Antonio River, to the east of the road leading to Mission San José, and to the west of land surveyed by Thomas Thatcher (BCDR K2:334). In February of the following year, Cook declared the property to be hers, solely. She made a point to state that the property was purchased separately from her husband and with her own resources. Elizabeth Cook also declared that it was the location of her dairy farm (BCDR J2:311). In September of 1858, Elizabeth Cook, with the consent of her husband, sold the property to Joseph French for the sum of \$10,000 (BCDR R2:176). In August of 1869, the Estate of Joseph French conveyed the property to the Estate of Emma Giddings, with George H. Giddings being the administrator of the estate (BCDR V1:189). Due to non-payment and a failure to fulfill the requirements of the deed recorded in 1869, the Sheriff of San Antonio ordered that the property be sold at public auction. It appears that the suit was brought forth by Samuel French, heir to Joseph French, against the estate of Emma Giddings. Bernard Mauermann and Louis Bergstrom purchased the property at the auction for a sum of \$10,207 (BCDR 4:199).

Mifflin Kenedy, Uriah Lott, and B.F. Yoakum purchased the property from Mauermann et al. in May of 1884 (BCDR 54:84). The property consisted of 340 acres located just north of the San Antonio River and south of the property owned by Sam Maverick, Fred Cocke, and Julius Hotz (Figure 2-1). The land was part of the Elizabeth Cook survey. Prior to this transaction, a portion of the property was given to the San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railway Company for the right-of-way of the tracks. The San Antonio Land and Improvement Company conveyed the purchase the property from M. Kenedy et al. in July of 1888 (BCDR 59:268). In June of 1907, the San Antonio Land and Improvement Company sold the property to B.L. Naylor for the sum of \$80,000 (BCDR 265:449). The Riverside Land Company (RLC) purchased property that contains the APE in July of 1907 (BCDR 271:508). Naylor sold the property for a sum of \$26,666.66 and took on two promissory notes both for the sum of \$26,666.66 to RLC. In December of 1908, RLC conveyed the property to E.C. Tarrant. The 3.7-acre lot was located to the north of property referred to as the Fair Ground (BCDR 304:162) (Figure 2-2). In April of 1912, Tarrant conveyed the property to George E. Chamberlain. At the time of this transaction, the property boundaries crossed Eads

Avenue to the north. The Fair Ground was still located to the south of the current APE. In December of 1920, Chamberlain conveyed the property to the San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railway Company (BCDR 628:19).

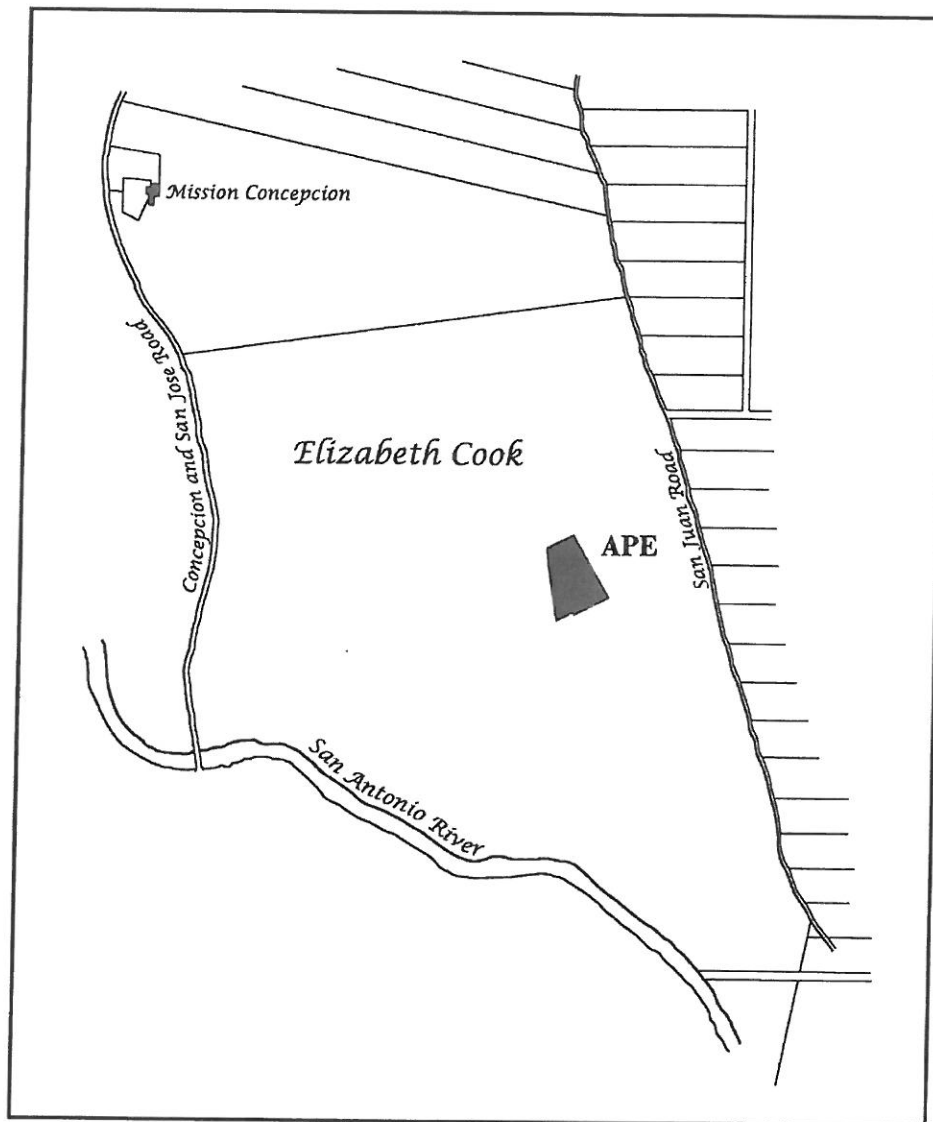


Figure 2-1. Map of the 1884 deed transaction. The current APE was included in the conveyance.

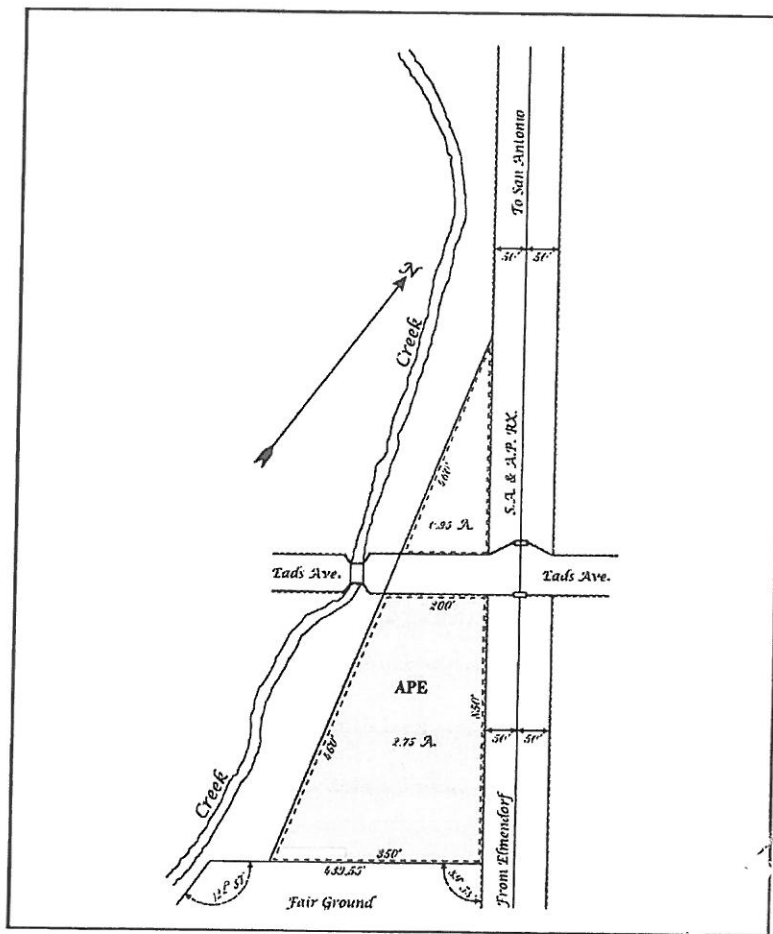


Figure 2-2. The transaction in 1912 that included the current APE.

In August of 1971, SASCO Inc. purchased the property from the Ethel Roberts Estate. In the transaction, a lien was placed on the property by the grantors. The lien was placed on a note for the sum of \$35,000 (BCDR 6621:529).

In December of 1979, SASCO Inc. sold the property to L. Charles Neely Jr. for what appears to be a sum of \$100,000. The deed indicates that Neely was to assume the responsibility of two notes that had previously been taken on the property. One note was for the sum of \$35,000 and the other was for \$65,000 (BCDR 1805:760). Neely conveyed the current APE to the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind in August of 2007 (BCDR 13558:2260). The conveyance was a gift to the organization and recorded as a charitable contribution. The Lighthouse for the Blind retains ownership of the property, and the current project was undertaken to allow the organization to build a new facility on the grounds.

Chapter 3: Archaeological Field and Laboratory Methods

Field Methods

A staff archaeologist and field technicians from the CAR were present during the excavation of the backhoe trenches. The features exposed in the backhoe trench (BHT) were documented to the extent possible and without further impact to them. The documentation consisted of photography, measurements, and soil descriptions. Profiles of one wall of each backhoe trench were drawn. No artifacts were collected during the project although artifacts observed during the trenching were documented in the monitoring notes.

Laboratory Methods

All project-related paper work is permanently curated at the CAR. Field notes and forms were placed in archival folders and converted into electronic material. Due to their soiled nature, all field forms were completed in pencil and stored in archival quality page protectors. A copy of the report and all digital material, including photographs, were burned onto a CD and permanently curated with the field notes and project documentation at the CAR.

Chapter 4: Results of Investigations

Two backhoe trenches were excavated during the course of the project. Prior to trenching, CAR archaeologists conducted a reconnaissance of the APE to determine potential trench locations (Figure 4-1). The terrain was uneven throughout the APE. A ridge was present in the southeastern portion of the project area. It formed an impediment for the backhoe. The ridge appeared to follow the route of the Concepción *Acequia* as described by Cox (2005). A section along the ridge within reach of the backhoe was selected for the location of BHT 1. Access to what appears to be a lateral of the *acequia* that drained into the current ditch (and what appears to be a creek on historic maps) was not a problem.

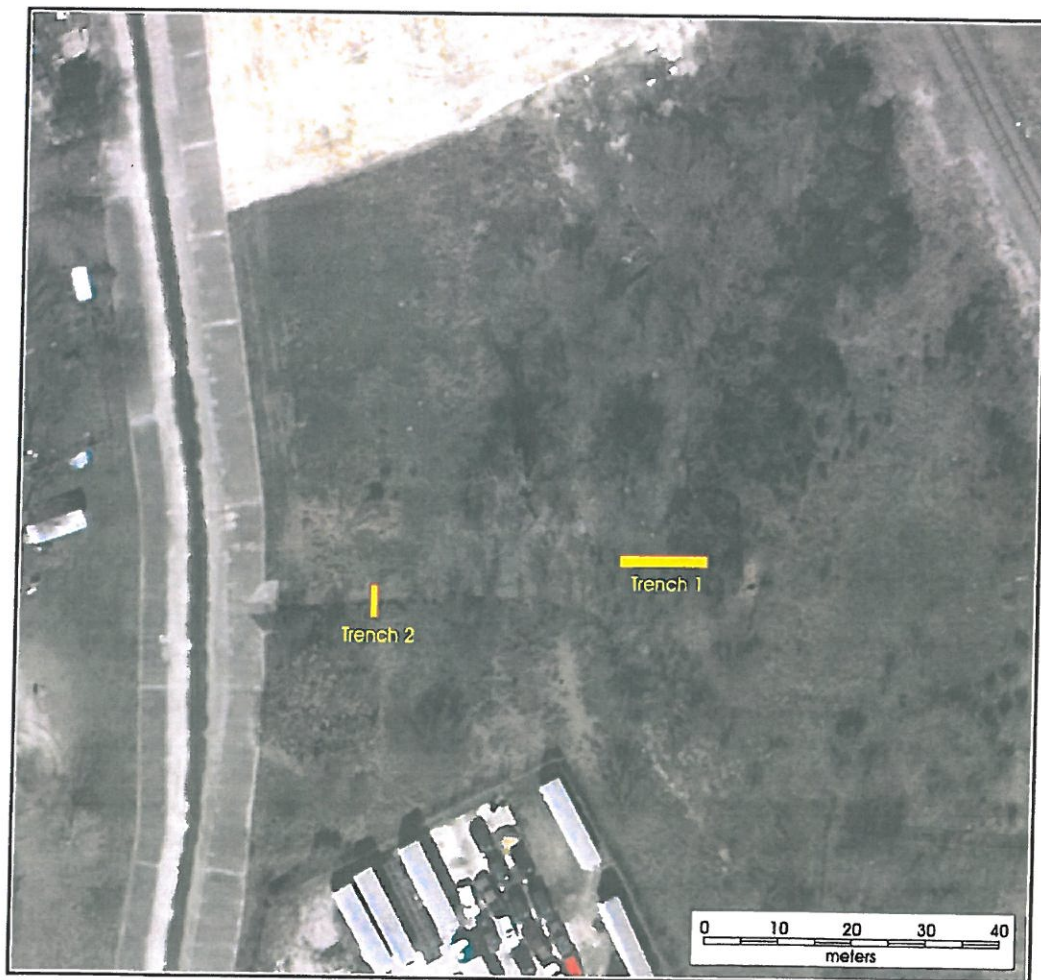


Figure 4-1. Current aerial photograph with the location of the backhoe trenches.

BHT 1 was approximately 12 m (39.4 ft.) long and had a maximum depth of 3 m (9.8 ft.). The backhoe trench was placed along the edge of the ridge that was noted within the APE in an area believed to be in line with the path of the Concepción *Acequia*. BHT 1 appears to have encountered a portion of the *acequia* in the eastern portion of the backhoe trench. The base of the *acequia* appears to have cut into caliche (Figure 4-2 and 4-3). The fill that was noted inside the *acequia* contained fragments of clear glass, wood, wire, a Pepsi Co. bottle, red brick, bathroom tiles, a potato chip bag, and electrical conduit. None of the material appears to be related to the colonial period or even the early portion of the twentieth century. In addition, the western portion of the *acequia* appears to have been impacted at some point, possibly when grading the lot in preparation for the asphalt surface (Figure 4-4 and 4-5). The western portion of the north wall of the profile of BHT 1 shows a lens of the caliche overlaying dark brown clay. It is possible that grading truncated the top of the west bank of the *acequia* and pushed it into the *acequia* channel.

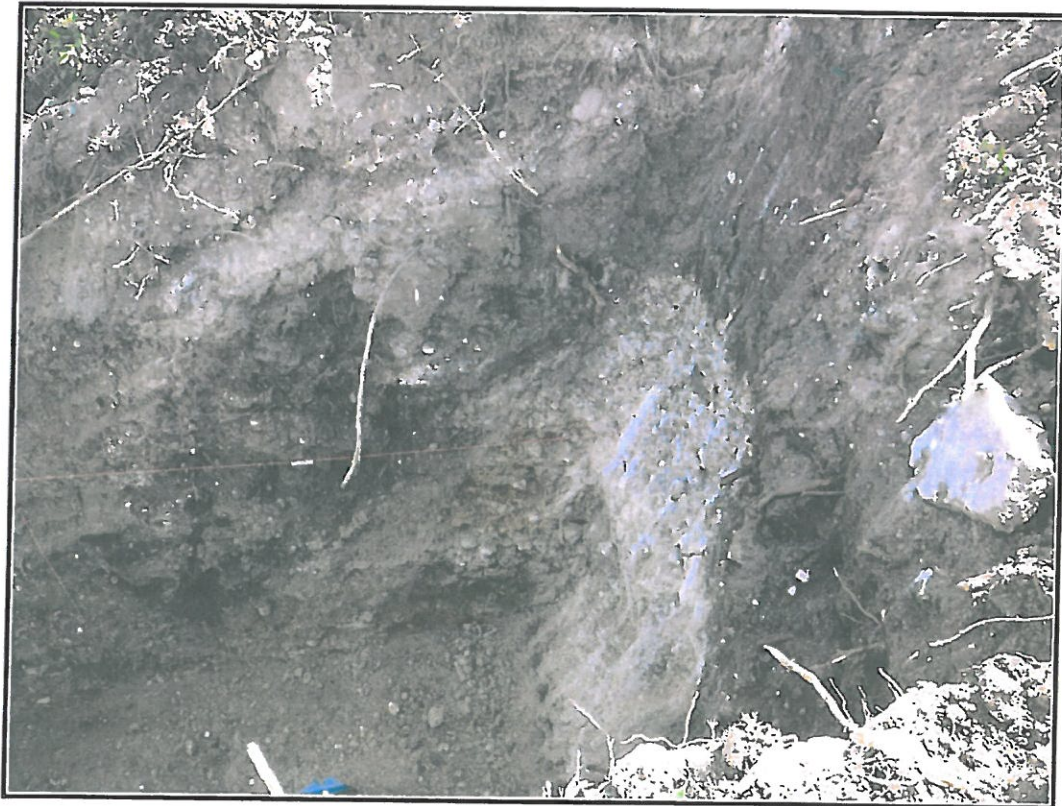


Figure 4-2. *Acequia* edge cut into underlying caliche in north wall of BHT 1.

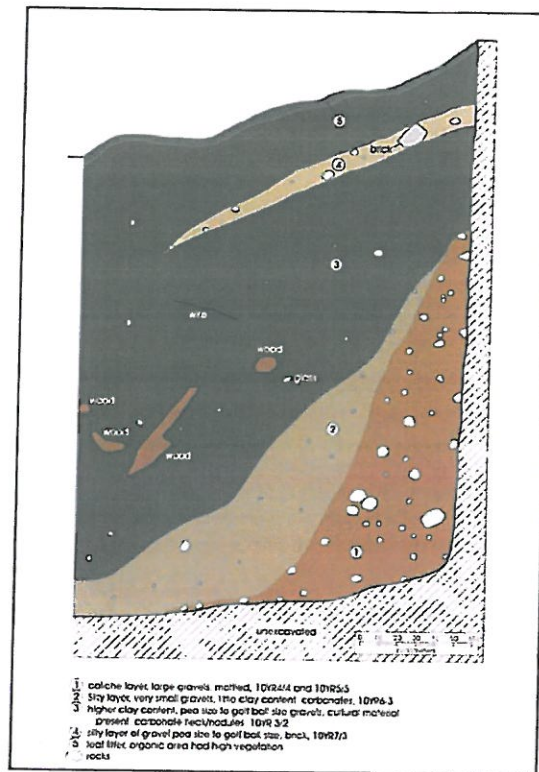


Figure 4-3. North wall profile of BHT 1 showing the eastern edge of the acequia.

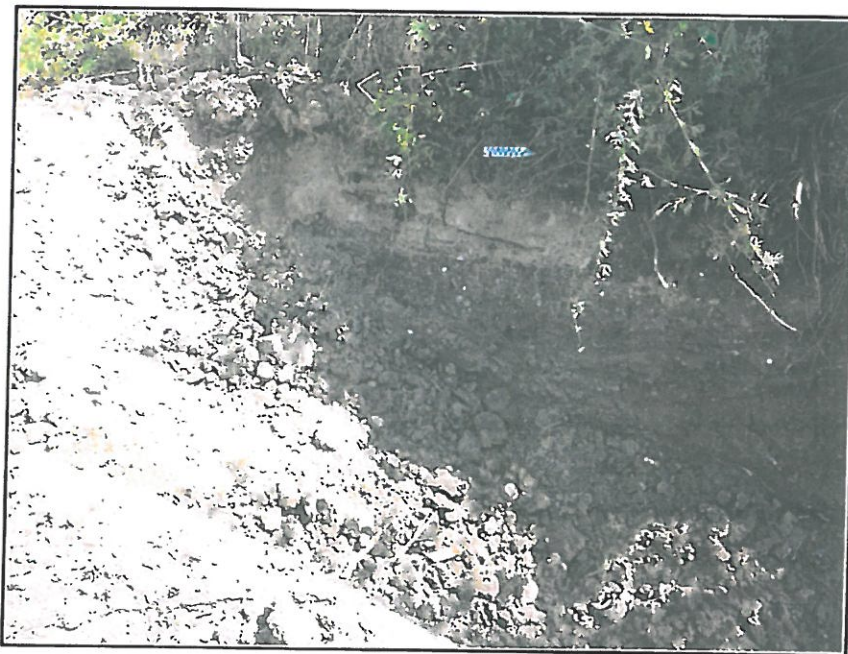


Figure 4-4. North wall of BHT 1 near western end of trench. Note the caliche layer that tops the clay loam mix.

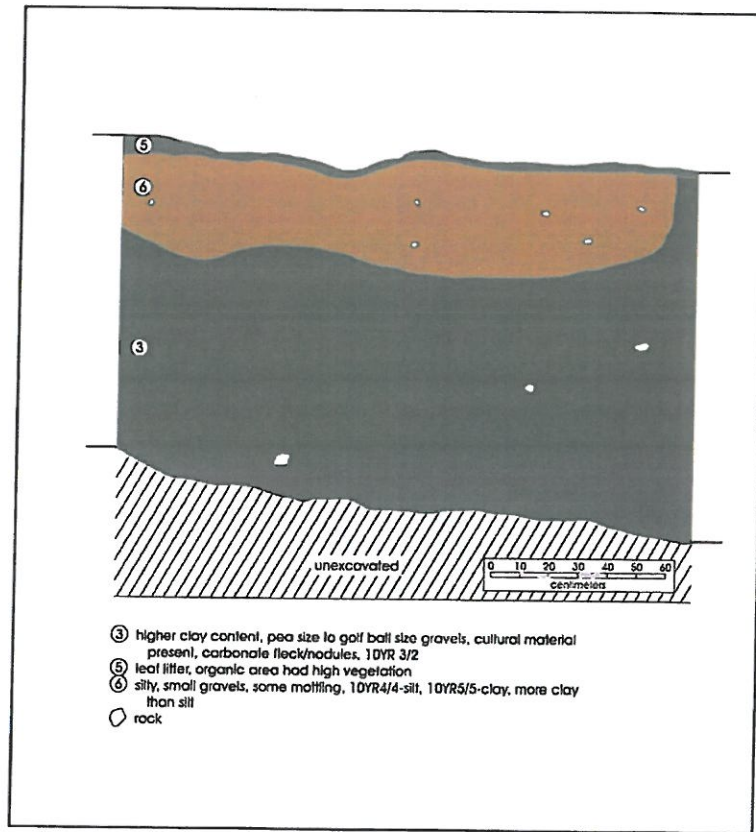


Figure 4-5. North wall profile of the western edge of BHT 1 showing no sign of the acequia bank.

The *acequia* trench appears to be at least 6.85 m (22.5 ft.) in width. However, it is likely that the western edge has not been reached by BHT 1. It is possible that the backhoe trench crossed the *acequia* at an angle rather than perpendicular to the path, resulting in the wider profile.

BHT 2 was excavated in the southwestern portion of the project area. It crossed the drainage ditch that empties into the large concrete-lined channel located to the west of the APE. The backhoe trench bisected the ditch and revealed the distinct profile of the *acequia* (Figure 4-6 and 4-7). The ditch was dug into a yellowish brown, dense clay, and the sediment that was subsequently deposited was a grayish brown clay that contained gravels and carbonates. Cultural material noted in Backhoe Trench 2 included a fragment of cut bone and a piece of rusted metal. Also, clear glass fragments were noted in the backdirt. Again, the cultural material does not appear to date to the colonial period or even the early twentieth century. The *acequia* trench is approximately 1.7 m (5.6 ft.) wide and extends to a maximum depth of 1 m (3.28 ft.) below the surface.



Figure 4-6. Photograph of acequia lateral in east wall of BHT 2.

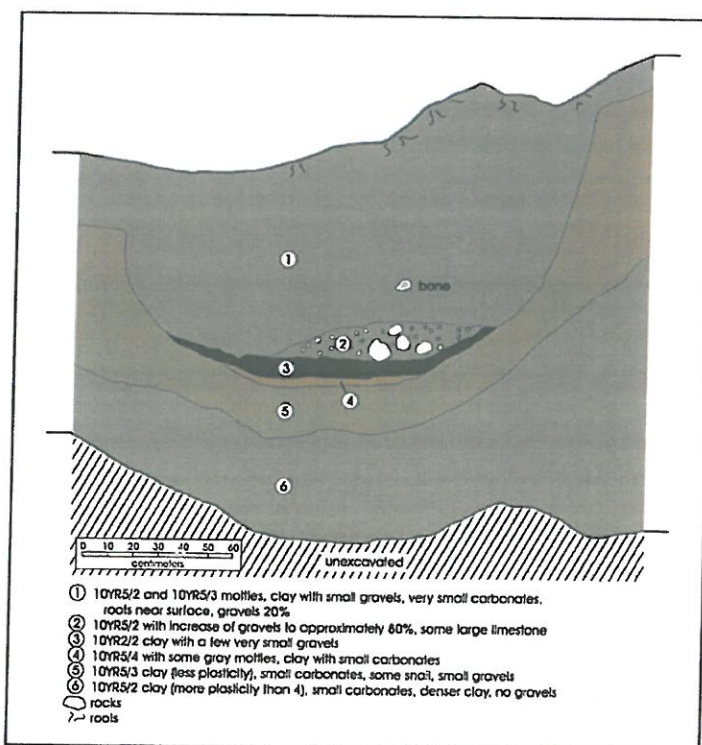


Figure 4-7. East wall profile of BHT 2. Outline of the acequia is clearly defined.

It appears that BHT 2 encountered a portion of the lateral ditch that drained into the creek as noted on the 1912 map of the property. Research indicates that the Concepción *Acequia* may have had a branch in this area that returned to the San Antonio River at a different point. The Concepción *Acequia* had at least four locations where it re-entered the River. It is possible that the *Acequia* branched out within the APE into two separate routes that re-entered the San Antonio River at different locations.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations

Historical maps indicate that the future site of the new facility for the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind is located in an area that contains a portion of the Concepción *Acequia*. Two backhoe trenches were excavated within the APE during the course of the project. One was located along the base of a ridge within the APE. The other was across a depression within the APE that is still being used as a drainage ditch. Both backhoe trenches revealed evidence of the *acequia*.

BHT 1 revealed a portion of the Concepción *Acequia* in the eastern portion of the backhoe trench. The western edge of the backhoe trench appeared to have been disturbed by modern grading of the APE. The western edge of the BHT profile shows a lens of the basal caliche matrix that the *acequia* was cut into. However, this lens overlays *acequia* fill suggesting that it may have been pushed into the *acequia* during grading activities associated with site preparation prior to the laying of the asphalt present across the APE. The matrix inside of the *acequia* trench did not appear to contain material that related to the colonial occupation of the area. In addition, the cultural material did not relate to the nineteenth century either. Rather, the material encountered appeared to be related to the mid-to-late twentieth century.

BHT 2 was excavated to bisect a portion of the visible drainage ditch leading into the concrete-lined creek adjacent to the APE. The drainage ditch appears to be a branch of the Concepción *Acequia*. The profile of the backhoe trench had the distinct outline of an irrigation ditch. Though the cultural material encountered within the *acequia* does not appear to predate the twentieth century, it appears that this portion of the *acequia* has had very little disturbance. One possible reason for this is that the ditch has been cleaned from time to time because it is still being used to feed runoff into the larger concrete-lined creeks located to the west of the project area.

The two ditches fall in the southern portion of the APE. Consultation with the City Archaeologist, Kay Hindes, and the contractors for the construction of the new facility indicated that there would be little subsurface disturbance in this area. The planned structure is to be placed closer to the northern portion of the APE, and the remainder of the area will be capped with asphalt and concrete for parking. The City Archaeologist indicated her desire that there be the least amount of disturbance to the *acequia*. At the time of the site visit, it was noted that there would be some grading needed to level the southern portion of the APE, but it would be shallow and would have little impact on the *acequia*. CAR agrees with the recommendations that the least amount of impact to the *acequia* would be in the best interest of preserving the feature. Capping the features with concrete and asphalt would help to protect the *acequia* from impact. CAR recommends no further investigations.

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